PORT OF ASTORIA

August 5, 1981

Mr. A. J. Heinemann
Chief, Navigation Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Portland District
P.O. Box 2946
Portland, Oregon 97208

Dear Adam:

A petition was submitted to the Port of Astoria Commissioners at the July 14, 1981 Commission meeting. This petition requested the Port of Astoria to initiate action requesting the Corps of Engineers to perform certain dredging projects on the Skipanon River. As a result, the Commission scheduled a public hearing regarding Skipanon River development. This hearing was held Thursday, July 30, 1981, at the Port Commission Conference Room. Attached are minutes of the meeting and copies of all written testimonies submitted.

Mr. Jack Bechly, Chief, Waterways Maintenance Branch, presented the Corps of Engineers' position in a thorough and concise manner. He advised there was presently no economic justification for dredging the Skipanon River beyond the present 14-foot project.

In the first paragraph, page two of the attached minutes, a letter dated February 14, 1980 from George Grove to you was quoted. Although Mr. Grove's letter indicated the Port would assume sponsorship of an upper Skipanon dredging project, the Port sponsorship has not been clearly established. The Port of Astoria Commission has not taken a formal position regarding the Skipanon dredging projects requested by the petitioners. I will advise you when their position has been formally established at a regular Commission meeting.

Sincerely,

Floyd Shelton

Floyd Shelton
Executive Director

FS:da

Enclosures

P.O. BOX 569 ASTORIA, OREGON 97103 (503) 325-4521

MINUTES - PORT OF ASTORIA
PUBLIC HEARING
SKIPANON RIVER DEVELOPMENT
THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1981 TAPE:
PORT COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM

Those in attendance were: Charles J. Thomson, Richard Olsen, Bern Shultz, Gene Dielkes, Herb Palmberg, Elmer Salmi, Jim Bergeron, Harold Herndon, Jack Bechly, Chris Genna, Mike Delapa, S. Dix Blomberg, George Blomberg, Gilbert Gramson, Max Berryaman, John Kalander, E. R. Baldwin, A. J. Conger, Norman Kujala.

Commissioners present included: Shaylor, Niemi, Johnson, Desler, Zafiratos. Staff present included: Shelton, Notos, Shannon, Rose.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Chairman Fred Shaylor. He explained that this public hearing had been called by the Port of Astoria Commission at the request of a petition signed by 571 people, which asked for the Commission's support in obtaining authorization from the Corps of Engineers for additional dredging in the Skipanon River. Chairman Shaylor introduced Mr. Jack Bechly, Chief, Waterways Maintenance Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Bechly discussed the Lower Skipanon project which is currently authorized to 14 feet at M.L.L.W. from the Columbia River to just below the railroad bridge. He advised that this project was authorized to 30 feet, however, the Corps did not feel there was economic justification for a channel deeper than 14 feet based on the present traffic on the river. He advised the majority of boats using the river currently draw 10 to 12 feet.

Next, Chairman Shaylor called on Gil Gramsom, City of Warrenton. Mr. Gramson deferred his comments until later in the meeting. Chairman Shaylor then called on Mr. Elmer Salmi of the Warrenton Chamber of Commerce, also representing the Warrenton Boat Yard. Mr. Salmi discussed the need for dredging of the Skipanon as outlined in the petition submitted to the Commission on July 14, 1981. He reiterated the requests contained in that petition.

Chairman Shaylor then called on Mr. A. J. Conger, a local fisherman. Mr. Conger expressed his opinion that the best place for moorage in the area was at the Warrenton marina and he felt this waterway should be further developed beyond the 14 feet. Chairman Shaylor then called for additional public comment. Mr. Norman Kujala, owner of Oregon Ocean Services, 225 S. W. Galena, Warrenton, Oregon. Mr. Kujala submitted written testimony dated July 30, 1981, which is attached. Chairman Shaylor then called on Mr. Richard Olsen, a Warrenton land owner, who offered his help to remove snags and sinkers from the channel. He urged the channel be adequately dredged.

Chairman Shaylor then called on Mr. Bern Shultz. Mr. Shultz testified in support of dredging the upper Skipanon projects. He submitted testimony which is attached. Also, a copy of a Corps of Engineers record dated December 21, 1971.

Chairman Shaylor then called on Mr. Jim Bergeron, OSU Marine Extension agent. Mr. Bergeron said he represented several fishermen who were out fishing at the time of the hearing. Mr. Bergeron advised these fishermen have problems stemming from their hitting sinkers and snags in the Skipanon River. Chairman Shaylor then called on Mr. Gil Gramson, City Manager, Warrenton. Mr. Gramson then outlined the City's efforts to facilitate dredging projects on the Skipanon. He indicated the City did not object to dredging the river to 18 feet. However, he urged the 14-foot project be accomplished as soon as possible, and a separate project be undertaken to request additional dredging beyond the 14 feet.

Chairman Shaylor then introduced again Mr. Jack Bechly, Corps of Engineers. Mr. Bechly discussed the Corps' limitation and requirements for new projects. He advised there was a need for a local sponsor to formally request the project in order for the Corps to proceed with a feasibility analysis. Mr. Elmer Salmi quoted a letter dated February 14, 1980, from Mr. George Grove, former Executive Director, Port of Astoria, to Mr. Adam Heinemann, Chief-Navigation Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Grove indicated in his letter the Port of Astoria would act as the local sponsor for a dredging project above Harbor Street Bridge to Eighth Street Dam River.

Other citizens submitted written testimony. They were Charles J. Thompson; Jack R. Hams, and D. E. Palmberg, Partners, North Coast Mini Storage; David E. Palmberg, citizen, Warrenton; John T. Davis, boat owner; and John R. Kolander, West Coast Propeller Service, Warrenton, Oregon.

Mr. Elmer Salmi, Managing Operator, Warrenton Boat Yard, also submitted some written testimony as well as verbal.

There being no further comment, the meeting was adjourned.

PORT OF ASTORIA

August 11, 1981

Mr. A. J. Heinemann
Chief, Navigation Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Portland District
P.O. Box 2946
Portland, Oregon 97208

Dear Adam:

I understand a group of Warrenton citizens have requested the Corps of Engineers to do two additional dredging projects on the Skipanon River. Further, I understand the bid to dredge the Skipanon River to a 14-foot depth was considerably lower than was estimated by the Corps. The Warrenton group recommends that the $510,113 difference between the allocated costs and the bid costs be used to accomplish additional dredging on the Skipanon. One recommendation is to dredge the Skipanon from river mile one to the railroad bridge an additional four feet, making that channel 18 feet deep and 200 feet wide. They further recommend that a channel six feet deep by 40 feet wide be dredged from the river bridge to the Eighth Street dam. They estimate the cost for these two projects would be more than covered by the cost estimated for the 14-foot project.

The Port of Astoria Commission supports this concept for development of the Skipanon River.

Mr. Gene Dielkes, a member of the Warrenton committee, has advised me his group will be working with the local Marine Extension office to develop the economic justification data. I assume the Warrenton committee will also take responsibility for obtaining the necessary permits for the projects.

With respect to additional dredge spoil material resulting from the increased dredging, we cannot assume at this time that this material will meet the Port's fill requirement on the existing designated disposal site. As data is made available, we will need to evaluate the potential impact of the increased amount of spoils.

We believe this project for Skipanon River development will have a significant beneficial impact on the development of the fishing and recreational industry of Clatsop County.

Sincerely,

Floyd Shelton

Floyd Shelton
Executive Director

FS:da

P.O. BOX 569 ASTORIA, OREGON 97103 (503) 325-4521

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
PORTLAND DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 2946
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

NPPND-WM

19 August 1981

Mr. Floyd Shelton
Executive Director
Port of Astoria
P. O. Box 569
Astoria, OR 97103

Dear Floyd:

The comments of a group of Warrenton citizens referred to in your letter of 11 August 1981, do not entirely reflect our actual budgeting processes. The Contracting Officer's estimate for a particular project is prepared immediately before bid opening and is based on the job as advertised and recognizes expected competition, special job conditions, etc. at time of bid opening. In the case of the Skipanon Channel project, funds in both fiscal years 81 and 82 had been budgeted to accomplish the maintenance dredging operation. This funding allowance was based on our earliest estimate of the cost of the work. The low bid received will require full utilization of fiscal year 81 funds budgeted and part of those funds budgeted in fiscal year 82. The remaining funds in 1982 will be allocated to other projects as priorities and shoaling patterns require. We are never in a situation where funds are available to do as much work as we feel is necessary in the Operation and Maintenance program.

Mr. Bechly of my staff attended the Astoria Port Commission meeting on 30 July 1981 in your offices in Astoria, Oregon. Our 1981 and 1982 maintenance program for the Skipanon River and modifications as proposed by the group from Warrenton, Oregon were discussed in detail during the course of that meeting. I believe Mr. Bechly made it clear that the Portland District does not feel dredging beyond the 14 foot project depth (plus one foot allowable overdepth) planned for in our upcoming contract is justified. The majority of boats currently utilizing the Skipanon River project area are in the 12 foot or less category, and the few boats requiring greater depths will be able to transit the area most of the time when tides are above the mean lower low water (MLLW) federal project datum level. The lack of moorage space available for those large vessels also detracts from needs for deeper depths in the federal project area.

Maintenance of the 6x40 foot federal project above the railroad bridge on the Skipanon River and possible extension of the project to a commercial fish processing facility on the side channel has also been discussed at length in written correspondence and meetings such as the one on 30 July 1981. The 6x40 foot project currently has depths in excess of 6 feet in many areas and is generally not shallower than 3 feet (MLLW). Again, we feel that the small craft that would use the 6 foot project can presently utilize the project, except during low tide periods. Facilities available to support this project are almost nonexistent.

NPPND-WM

19 August 1981

Mr. Floyd Shelton

With priorities for other navigation and power projects within the Portland District and the tightness of federal funding at this time, we do not believe it justified to consider maintenance of this long time dormant project. As indicated, the suggested side channel will require separate study and authorization.

We appreciate the Port of Astoria's concern and the concern of the citizens and other local interests in the Astoria - Warrenton area regarding maintenance of our federal projects. We are attempting to provide the maximum amount of maintenance practicable with current funding limitations and user practices. We feel that our upcoming channel maintenance contract for the Skipanon River, together with the annual maintenance by the Hopper dredge PACIFIC in the downstream portions of the Skipanon River channel are sufficient to provide for current and near future vessel use.

Sincerely,

A.J. HEINEMAN
Chief, Navigation Division